

DON BOSCO'S MADONNA

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*The Virgin Mary
offers modern man
serenity
and a word
of reassurance:
triumph
of hope over
anxiety.*

Cover: **Jesus,
the Good Shepherd**
Stained glass



From The Editor's Desk

Love Still Speaks the Truth

Be compassionate as your heavenly Father is compassionate.
Jesus challenges us with those words and there is more in them than first meets the eye. How is God compassionate?

Jesus defines this for us: God, Jesus says, lets His sun shine on the bad as well as the good. God's love doesn't discriminate, it simply embraces everything. Like the sun it doesn't shine selectively shedding its warmth on the vegetables because they are good and refusing its warmth to the weeds because they are bad. It just shines and everything, irrespective of its condition, receives its warmth.

That's a stunning truth: God loves us when we are good and God loves us when we are bad. The father of the prodigal son and the older brother loves both, one in his weakness and the other in his bitterness, and his embrace is not dependent upon his conversion. He loves them both irrespective of their distance from him.

And we are asked to love in the same way.

How do we do that? First of all, it poses this question: If God loves us equally when we are bad and when we are good, then why be good? This is an interesting question, though not a deep one. Love, understood properly, is never a reward for being good. Instead goodness is always a consequence of having been loved. We aren't loved because we are good, but hopefully we become good because we experience love.

But how do we, like God, embrace indiscriminately?

We do so by holding our personal and moral ground in a gracious and loving way. And, for this, we have Jesus' example. He embraced everyone, sinners and saints alike, without ever suggesting that sin and virtue aren't important. Actually, a truly loving embrace suggests the reverse. Unfortunately, because you are compassionate and understanding you may be accused of being hypocritical by those who think they hold the higher moral ground.

Actually your response is the non-discriminating embrace of Jesus. Everything inside of your body language, your smile and maybe your embrace, and your person, will say two things: "I love you, you're a good friend, (son or daughter) and I will always love you no matter what. But I don't agree with you on this matter." Your embrace doesn't say, "I agree with you!" it simply says, "I love you!" and the affirmation of your love, even as you hold your personal and moral ground will, perhaps more than anything else you can offer, invite the person to reflect upon your moral ground and why you hold certain things so deeply.

There is a time to be compassionate as God is compassionate, to let our sun shine indiscriminately, on both the vegetables and the weeds without denying which is which.

Fr. Ian Douulton sdb

10. A GOD-SEND EDUCATION

by Fr. Erasto Fernandez, sss

It was during a deluge one exceptionally wet July that her maid brought Nandini Mehta news that two street children were playing in the rain outside her Malabar Hill bungalow. They had recently lost their father. Without more ado, Mehta brought them home, caressed their cheeks, and offered them food. They turned out to be the first wards at Bal Anand, which became for others who followed, a place of nurture and nourishment. Here, they play, paint, sing, eat and are instructed in letters, ethics and a way of life aligned with the principles of J. Krishnamoorthy, Mehta's own philosophical teacher.

When the Mehta family had to relocate to an apartment next door, Nandini shifted Bal Anand to a row of garages she purchased especially for the 'school'. "It was not modelled on a blueprint, or on some grandiose ideals of education, or even on an elaborate manifesto," says Devi Mangaldas, Mehta's daughter, who has built on her mother's foundations ever since she took over the project. "It was conceived as a place of care and refuge, where children would be taught to observe, listen and question." Bal Anand is something of a home-school and baalwadi, where children aged 2½ to 14, from the shanties of Malabar Hill, get a wholesome meal of fruits, sprouts or brown bread sandwiches, a glass of milk and a calcium tablet, before or after they return from their day at the local municipal school. For a couple of hours, they are tutored, especially in English and Maths, and taught basic conversational skills by four paid teachers (two of

whom grew up at Bal Anand) and a few volunteers.

Medical attention is provided when a child falls ill, and monetary relief readily offered to an indigent parent. Compassion is instilled in them by having the children visit the terminally ill, or contribute to victims of a catastrophe. "We encouraged them to make small donations, even as little as 50 paise, to the Tsunami-hit," says Mangaldas, a counsellor at J.B. Petit High School, who believes the children must be taught to be grateful for their lot, no matter how bad, knowing there's always someone more unfortunate. But if Bal Anand has cultivated kindness in these street children, it has, in a smaller measure, done the same for the more fortunate girls of J.B. Petit, who visit occasionally with parcels and other gifts. "Living as our children do in cramped quarters, with the TV blaring, or parents arguing... being witnesses to drunken brawls, we teach them to carve out an inner space where they can find peace. At Bal Anand we try to open up new dimensions for the child, of laughter and joy where s/he can find security, comfort and dignity," she says.

Blessings in Disguise

What began as an attempt to help poor helpless children ended up being a full-scale holistic education for the affluent residents of Malabar Hill, Mumbai. For when one opens one's heart to the needy, it is not only the indigent who benefit but the donors as well. But for this to happen, one needs to approach the situation in the right

manner. Generally, when people reach out to the poor, they tend to be moved emotionally by pity or sympathy, and 'give' generously to the adversely affected, but this generally comes out of the surplus they have. While this is good and commendable and certainly a great help to the indigent, it still leaves the recipients exactly where they were, having attended to their numerous pressing needs only temporarily. The generous gestures of their well-wishers fill their empty stomachs but do little for their sense of dignity and self-worth. The indigent children would still continue to see themselves as a class apart, different from those others who live in posh flats and have everything and everyone at their beck and call. Whatever help they get, it leaves them envying what the others have and what they could never ever dream of possessing, no matter how lucky they may be. As the saying goes, 'Give a person a fish, and you have relieved his hunger for a day or an hour! Teach him to fish and you have set him on his feet for life!'

What the Eucharist meaningfully celebrated inculcates in its participants is largely different, even though externally it might look somewhat alike. Eucharist invites us to *share as equals*, as brothers and sisters of the same heavenly Father, at the one table that the Lord sets for all his beloved children. Ideally, at the Eucharist there is no distinction of any kind - between rich and poor, educated and illiterate, cultured and uncouth! At the Lord's table all present are stripped of peripherals and unessentials, like what they might have or possess, and are made to value themselves for what they are in themselves - God's children, equal in his sight and each one worthy of the infinitely precious

death of his only Son, Jesus.

Self-gift is the Key

Further, the Eucharist invites us to love and give till it hurts; the challenge is to be able to truthfully say to the needy person: 'Brother, sister, take and eat: this is my body, my very life, in fact all I have to live on, which is given for you! I am here for you.' Doing something like this is really difficult, though not impossible. The Gospel story of the poor widow putting two little copper coins into the treasury box is a shining example of how Eucharist (the spirit of giving thanks for all of God's blessings) shapes a person's thinking. The key to such total selfless giving is the experience of what one has oneself received from the Lord. A true Christian lives not for her/himself, but for others. This simply means that the good of the other ranks even above one's own good. 'Greater love a person cannot have than when s/he lays down his/her life for a friend.' So, for one who celebrates the Eucharist meaningfully and wishes to live it out in daily life, it is not merely a question of giving the extras one possesses to others, (though we cannot repeat sufficiently that even this is difficult in most cases and is tremendously beneficial to those at the receiving end), but of even depriving oneself in favour of the other. 'You must increase, I must decrease' becomes the guiding principle in such situations!

Experience shows us that this kind of giving brings its own special joy and peace in its wake. It involves a true overcoming of the Self in us. One literally feels free and light within - something which needs to be experienced to be believed - it doesn't make much sense theoretically or when one sits

on the fence cogitating but not yet acting to commit oneself! There is besides, the joy of seeing another human being come up and prosper in life. There is a saying that 'even eagles need a push' which means that even the great king of the skies would never learn to fly unless and until its mother pushed it out of the nest and closely monitored its first few timorous attempts to soar as only eagles can. The eagle is such a heavy bird that it cannot take off from ground level - it has to be thrown into the air and that too with considerable leeway to obviate any fatal falls! How much more do we human beings not need an encouraging word, a selfless gesture, an opportunity made available generously, a fault or mistake magnanimously forgiven - to set us on the path to progress and innovation. This is exactly what Jesus has done for every one of us through his dying-rising, whether we follow him publicly or not - he lovingly goads us on, adding a challenge for us to 'pass it on.'

Throw Your Hat

Some would perhaps want to know how one arrives at a safe and wise discernment about the right choice of the event or person in whose life one is to get involved. While there is no ready-made answer to this question, there are a few common-sense pointers and road-signs: the initial inspiration comes unsolicited, almost 'out of the blue', when one least expects it or even wants it. It is less an answer to a prayer than a God-given mission in life. It could be that this initial thought frightens the person, but at the same time there is an accompanying beckoning silver lining which prompts: 'Why not? Maybe I should give it a try!' Further, as one sets out in faith, little details

seem to fall into place almost by themselves one after another, giving one an inner sense of assurance that one is on the right track. One can, of course, always consult a more experienced person, or someone who is already successful in the field of generous self-giving.

Perhaps the most important step is to move from mere thought to some concrete action. It is like the person who for days has been thinking to himself, 'I should visit the new neighbours who have moved in recently!' but has done nothing about the visit so far. So, one bright morning he throws his hat across the fence onto the neighbour's front lawn - now he has to go across, at least in order to fetch his hat; and moving out into the neighbour's yard becomes all that much easier, and so does the visit.

The first small step taken, things generally will snowball and before we know what is happening, we are well on the way to something really good and rewarding. There are countless opportunities for everyone in our sprawling cities: almost every person one meets represents some particular need or other and poses a specific challenge. For Christians, the Small Christian Community one belongs to in the parish is itself a fantastic but realistic arena in which to try out such experiments in selfless giving. But wherever one attempts this kind of reaching out, what is really happening is that the Eucharist celebrated is coming alive - it is really transforming our lives. After all the greatest miracle at Eucharist is not so much the transformation of bread and wine into Jesus, but rather the transformation of self-centred hearts into the Body of Christ - waiting to be broken and shared: 'Take and eat ... take and drink! This is myself given for you!' □



"DO THIS IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME"

*Fr. Francisco Pereira, sdb
Catechetical Director, Vicariate of Kuwait & Administrator
of the Indian English Academy School, Kuwait*

I am thrilled and encouraged to pen my vocation story. It grew slowly and very tenderly in the confines of my family. I have very God-fearing parents who made sure that my two younger brothers and I attended Sunday Mass and Catechism classes regularly.

When I was in the seventh standard, my parents took me to see Fr. Cajetan Lobo, who was a relative. He was at Matunga in those days. That was my first visit to the Shrine and the school. After meeting this literally towering and saintly person I expressed my desire both to him and to my parents that I wanted to be like him. Fr. Lobo then directed me to Fr. Oscar Misquitta (who was the vocation promoter). Fr. Oscar called me to the Shrine every Thursday morning together with other young boys like me who wanted to become priests. From then on it was no turning back for me, I completed my high school in Lonavla, returned home to complete my Junior college then went back to Lonavla to do my Pre Novitiate Course and in 1988, the year of the death centenary of Don Bosco I made my first profession as a Salesian.

'To be a priest is to begin to suffer' those were the words of warning that Don Bosco's mother told him and I experienced this prophecy while pursuing my vocation. My journey to the priesthood was never smooth sailing. There were moments of fear, doubt, anxiety, hardship and loneliness. I experienced suffering, especially physical suffering along the way. Each time I had doubts or felt I would not be able to pursue my vocation I had some major physical



crisis in the form of a knee injury or kidney stones for which I had to be operated several times. Those moments of pain and struggle, confined me to my bed for days and even months. They were moments of solitude during which my faith and my vocation were strengthened. It was not just that I 'carried on' but I felt more fulfilled in my priestly and Salesian life.

I am sure those moments of physical suffering were God's way of trying to find a space in my life and it was meant above all to strengthen me along life's journey.

I was ordained on 20th December, 1997 and that was the most important day of my life. The theme I chose for my priesthood was **"Do this in remembrance of Me."** – It was meant to remind me that I had to imitate Him in all that He did and was, hence it was not just about celebrating the Holy Eucharist, it was also about doing what He did. "He went about doing good." □

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When Prayer No Longer Flows

By Michael Paul Gallagher

PRAYER IS FOR YOU (4)

Dear Tony,

Thank you for your interesting letter. You certainly made a few important discoveries for yourself, and I'm glad that my meditation on the Our Father helped you in ways that I did not foresee.

Facing Hurt Feelings

For our readers I'll begin by quoting your own words:

I did as you said, and took the Our Father very slowly. I was surprised to find how real it could be. When I came to the words about forgiving us as we forgive others it was too close for comfort. You see, for some time I've had a difficult relationship with one of the supervisors at work, a bossy type who gives me a hard time, and seems to have it in for me in particular. I needn't go into the details, but sometimes when I visit the church on the way home, and try to be quiet, I realize how churned up I am, even bitter. It's hard to pray then. But what you said about the Our Father forced me to see that I have to face it, and ask to forgive that man in my heart. Otherwise the prayer is all wrong, isn't it?

And the other discovery I made is that sometimes I don't really want to pray. I drop into the church out of routine. But I'm empty and tired inside. The flame of faith is very low, and I leave after a few minutes of struggle. What would you suggest for those 'useless' days?

Dealing with Resentment

Well done, Tony! I think you've hit on two really important areas of difficulty. Perhaps recognizing

the difficulty clearly is half the battle. You're right. You can't pray genuinely if you are *clinging* to some bitterness or anger. Notice how I put that. It's sometimes impossible to *feel* forgiving and positive towards a difficult person. But forgiving is possible in spite of feelings, at least in the sense of trying to understand and not to 'harden the heart' as the Bible so often says.

Above all, as I said, try not to cling to the resentment. Bring it before God, who knows and loves that other person, and you may find even your feelings gradually healed. I don't think it's easy. It's slow. But you can decide to fight bitterness, to try to let go of any animosity, and more important still, you can ask for the grace to forgive more fully and deeply.

But come back to the bigger horizon of the *Our Father*. That phrase about forgiveness seems to suggest a dangerous bargain: asking God to imitate me! St. Paul, however, puts it the other way round: 'The Lord has forgiven you; now you must do the same' (Col. 3:13). So we are asked to imitate God's compassion. It's a two-way traffic, but the main flow starts from God.

If you refuse to share God's love of somebody else, then you are blocking your own receiving of that love in prayer. You are stopping the flow of that love from reaching out through you towards someone else. But remember: love is more a question of decision than of warm feelings. Our feelings are sometimes

very reluctant to follow our deeper desires.

Prayer and Life

If you brood on your hurts, or worse, if you nurse your grudges, then your prayer will be half-hearted - literally - and dishonest. But often if you make even the slightest effort to let go of the natural (and even justified) anger, or to understand the tense personality of that other man and the pressures on him, it can work wonders. Any step in the right direction, and you may find that the flow of prayer opens up again.

Tony, you put your finger on something that many people run into, except that they can miss the connection between a resentment they cling to and an inability to pray. But, as you found out, the Our Father suggests a deep link between our relationship to God and our relationship to others. Because prayer and life are never separate. They always influence one another, and growth in one means growth in the other.

What your experience taught you is central to being a friend of Christ.

Prayer is God's Doing

Your other difficulty is also a problem for most of us: that sense of not having the inner energy to pray, and perhaps not wanting to really. I have no magic answer, but I have a suggestion. Prayer involves more than you alone. We've just been saying that your attitude to other people is connected with prayer. But there is another relationship involved: that with God, of course. The flame of your desire may be weak, as you put it, but the flame of God's desire for you is more

important and never weak.

Perhaps that sounds great but a bit distant. So let's make it concrete. Think of the famous scene in the Gospel about Zacchaeus (*Lk 19: 1-10*). Nowadays in school children love to perform it as a little drama, with Jesus being welcomed to Jericho by the crowd, little Zacchaeus climbing the tree, and so on. And even small children, in their own way, can understand that this is a story of two desires, a weak desire and a strong desire.

Zacchaeus wants to see Jesus, but perhaps just out of curiosity. But Jesus *really* wants to find Zacchaeus, and even stay at his house. Do you see the parallel? When you or I are feeling only vaguely interested in prayer it's like Zacchaeus hiding, as I imagine, in the leaves of the tree, perhaps afraid of being seen or recognized. But he changes as soon as he knows that Jesus wants him and even loves him.

So when those 'useless days' come, and they will come, remember whom you approach in prayer. Try to change the focus, realizing how the Lord wants to reach out to you, even when you feel no desire to reach out to him. Give it a little time, and you may get beyond that 'useless' feeling. From those tired moments you learn that prayer is God's doing. You have simply to be patient with yourself and, like John the Baptist, prepare the way of the Lord. That change of wavelength is easier said than done. But it's the invitation of God that counts, like Jesus inviting himself into the house of the surprised Zacchaeus.

Let me know how you find these suggestions when you try them. Until then, God bless. □

walking with the Church



Substituting the Psalm

by Father Edward McNamara,
professor of liturgy at the Regina Apostolorum University, Rome

Q: *Can the psalm after the first reading (usually from the Old Testament) be replaced by a hymn related to the second reading (usually from the New Testament) or the Gospel? Music groups rarely have a repertoire that includes all the psalms, but can usually find something related to the second reading or Gospel.* - J.S., London

A: The short answer to this question is no. The General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM, American translation) is quite explicit in No. 61, which deals with the psalm:

"After the first reading comes the responsorial Psalm, which is an integral part of the Liturgy of the Word and holds great liturgical and pastoral importance, because it fosters meditation on the word of God.

"The responsorial Psalm should correspond to each reading and should, as a rule, be taken from the Lectionary.

"It is preferable that the responsorial Psalm be sung, at least as far as the people's response is concerned. Hence, the

psalmist, or the cantor of the Psalm, sings the verses of the Psalm from the ambo or another suitable place. The entire congregation remains seated and listens but, as a rule, takes part by singing the response, except when the Psalm is sung straight through without a response. In order, however, that the people may be able to sing the Psalm response more readily, texts of some responses and Psalms have been chosen for the various seasons of the year or for the various categories of Saints. These may be used in place of the text corresponding to the reading whenever the Psalm is sung. If the Psalm cannot be sung, then it should be recited in such a way that it is particularly suited to fostering meditation on the word of God.

Thus, although there is a lot of flexibility in order to promote singing the psalm, including the substitution of the psalm of the day and possible use of an approved metrical version, there is no occasion in which a non-biblical hymn may substitute the

psalm.

This is because no human work, no matter how musically or poetically accomplished, can substitute God's inspired word. This norm is already found in the GIRM, No. 57:

"In the readings, the table of God's word is prepared for the faithful, and the riches of the Bible are opened to them. Hence, it is preferable to maintain the arrangement of the biblical readings, by which light is shed on the unity of both Testaments and of salvation history. Moreover, it is unlawful to substitute other, non-biblical texts for the readings and responsorial Psalm, which contain the word of God."

Only God's Word enjoys that special presence of Christ which is found during the liturgical proclamation of the Word. As St. Augustine wrote in his lectures on the Gospel of John (30,1):

"The passage of the holy Gospel of which we have before discoursed to you, beloved, is followed by that of today, which has just now been read. Both the disciples and the Jews heard the Lord speaking; both men of truth and liars heard the Truth speaking; both friends and enemies heard Charity speaking; both good men and bad men heard the Good speaking. They heard, but He discerned; He saw and foresaw whom His discourse profited and would profit. Among those who were there, He

saw; among us who were to be, He foresaw. Let us therefore hear the Gospel, just as if we were listening to the Lord Himself present or let us say, O happy they who were able to see Him, because there were many of them who saw, and also killed Him; and there are many among us who have not seen Him, and yet have believed. For the precious truth that sounded forth from the mouth of the Lord was both written for our sakes, and preserved for our sakes, and recited for our sakes, and will be recited also for the sake of our posterity, even until the end of the world. The Lord is above; but the Lord, the Truth, is also here. For the body of the Lord, in which He rose again from the dead, can be only in one place; but His truth is everywhere diffused. Let us then hear the Lord, and let us also speak that which He shall grant to us concerning His own words."

God speaks to us through all the readings and not just the Gospels. We also respond to him using his inspired words which encapsulate all possible human reactions to the encounter with God. □

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Witnesses in & for Our Times



BL. ALBERTO MARVELLI (OCTOBER 5) 'LOVE NEVER RESTS'

by Mario Scudu (T/A I.D.)

On Sunday, September 5th 2004, Pope John Paul II beatified **Alberto Marvelli**, who was a member of the Catholic Action. This was also a cause of great joy for the Salesian family because he had, for many years, frequented the Salesian Oratory of Rimini. He is the first Salesian ex-student to have been declared a *Blessed* of the Church.

Alberto Marvelli found that his family was a great source of strength, the atmosphere at the Salesian Oratory where he heard of the lively accounts of Don Bosco and his young pupil St. Dominic Savio (whose slogan "death but not sin" impressed him very much), the Catholic Action and the FUCI. (Federation of Italian Catholic University Students)

"Alberto has spoken"

Alberto was born at Ferrara in 1918 of staunch and practicing Christian parents. His father Luigi (was a bank manager) and his mother Maria Mayr (of Bavarian origin) brought up a large family (six children) with Alberto being the first and Geltrude being the last. Each of them was welcomed, loved and educated in a truly Christian



manner. Alberto wrote of his father: "He was a Christian in the total sense of the term. There were no half measures for him, he was not covered by human respect and he never exhibited his virtues. He was sincere, cheerful, gracious and serene; that was his life." He had great praise for his mother Maria too: "With what gentleness she scolded us for being late! She was so strict yet so loving in everything pertaining to our spiritual and material life. Following the example of Christ she was everything to everyone: to those in the family, to outsiders and the poor as well. No one who knocked at her door went

away empty handed." Signora Maria, despite her household duties (till her husband died in 1933) taught Catechism in the parish where she was immensely loved by the boys of the Oratory (she was considered everyone's mother). She was the President of the Women section of the Catholic Action and she worked tirelessly for the protection of youngsters especially through the "Ladies of Charity" (*Dame di Carità*).

The year 1933 was a very important year for Alberto. It was in that year that the Marvelli family moved to Rimini close to the parish of Mary Help of Christians that was administered by the Salesians. To the parish was attached a very popular Oratory for boys. When his father died, Alberto wept bitterly, he was just 15 years old. It now fell to him to be the head of the family and his younger siblings looked up to him...all of them right down to the last to arrive - Geltrude. It was she who would give her testimony: "We young brothers and sisters would wait for him to come back in the evening. As soon as he entered the house he would greet his mother and then would ask each of us about ourselves. He was not very expressive but we knew that he loved us. It was his habit to open his Bible and read us a short passage. After the death of father, he helped mother to cope with the household responsibilities."

Alberto was not only a regular member of the Salesian Oratory (the circle of Don Bosco) but also an enthusiastic leader; he was good at a many games, an intelligent teacher and a convincing role model of both human and Christian values for many youngsters (his "aspirants").

When there was dispute among the boys they consulted him and asked him to be the arbiter. His decision was always accepted as right and definitive. In fact they would say: "Alberto has spoken," and that was the end of the dispute. Some time ago I had the good fortune to meet the enthusiastic 92 year old Angela Bertozzi, an active Cooperator, who had a truly historic "Salesian" memory regarding the Parish of Mary Help of Christians. Being a contemporary of Alberto's siblings she was fortunate to know not only Alberto but the entire Marvelli family as well. She still remembered Maria, the mother of Alberto, who was actively involved in Parish activities. She said of Alberto: "The way I often saw him pray in church, made a deep impression on me and he attracted many of us by his example. We already spoke of Alberto as a saint. He was a great leader in the Oratory, very humble and ready to help everyone."

There were two events that aroused in him great excitement and an enthusiasm for holiness and these sentiments resonated in so many youth all over the Salesian world. The youth of Rimini felt the same way as did Alberto. The first event was in 1933 (July 9). It was the day on which Dominic Savio was beatified. He was a boy who grew up at the school of Don Bosco at Valdocco in Turin. The second sent young all over Italy delirious with joy. April 1st 1934 was the day on which Don Bosco was declared a saint. On December 8th, following the example of Dominic Savio, Alberto consecrated his heart to the Immaculate Madonna "**so that I may always be pure and Immaculate like you and so that you will help me to be good and**

obedient, patient, kind...." He was just 16 years old. His most preferred invocation to the Madonna was **"My Mother, my confidence."**

To Bologna, Cinisello Balsamo and Turin

In 1939 he completed his high school (among his companions was the famous Federico Fellini), and not having been accepted to the Naval academy, he enrolled himself at the engineering college in Bologna.

In the meantime Italy entered the war (1940). Alberto went to Cinisello Balsamo (Milan) to work in a foundry. Even in this new environment though there were many difficulties, according to reliable sources, Alberto always won the goodwill of all the other employees especially those younger than he and those who were poor. He was concerned about their problems and he used to assist them in any way he could. He visited those who were sick and encouraged apprentices to attend evening school.

He graduated in 1941 and was exempted from the army. On December 22, he was employed at Turin office of "Fiat." There he shared an accommodation with his brother who was a student at the military academy. Even here he frequented the Catholic Action and the group of St. Vincent de Paul. (He was a great admirer of the young Pier Giorgio Frassati - now Blessed) who died a short time later.

Are we not here to help?

In 1944 when the allies arrived at Rimini, Alberto came back to the city and joined the Christian Democrats. He seriously took up politics and was appointed councillor for

"Buildings and Reconstruction." Then in 1945 he was appointed mayor of the town and assigned the task of helping the homeless. He wrote in his diary: **"To serve is better than to be served. Jesus served."** His office was continuously busy with people going in and out asking for help. Alberto had a kind and reassuring answer for all who came to him. He never sent anyone away (even those without a job). He was accustomed to say: **"Are we not here to help?"** And he helped everyone.

In the spring of 1946 Alberto, relinquished his position as mayor and he actively participated in propaganda for the election the deputies to Constitutional assembly. During this political assignment he brought with him his inseparable bicycle and was on his way to attend a meeting outside Rimini when he was crushed by a speeding allied truck that was out of control. It was October 5th 1946.

This is the testimony of Mons. Fausto Lanfranchi, the vice postulator of his cause of Beatification, and someone who knew him personally: **"Alberto was indefatigable, a charismatic speaker in politics and in the Catholic Action. He was exceptional from all points of view, his spirituality was profound, his commitment to the poor constant.** Here, above all, from a human point of view there was no one like him. **He was an everyday saint."**

He is a model for everyone, but especially for so many youngsters who are listless, apathetic, bored, without ideals or values, while they are centered on themselves and their passing pleasures. In short, he is truly a modern saint for the XXI Century. □

IN A CHEERFUL MOOD

Suitor Approval

A good friend of mine warned me that, as my three daughters became old enough to date, I'd disapprove of every young man who took them out.

But when the time came, I was pleased that my friend's prediction was wrong. Each boy was pleasant and well mannered.

Talking to my daughter Joanna one day, I said that I liked all the young men she and her sisters brought home.

"You know, Dad," she replied, "we don't show you everybody."

Boarding Drill

At the airport for a business trip, I settled down to wait for the boarding announcement at Gate 35. Then I heard the voice on the public address system saying, "We apologize for the inconvenience, but Delta Flight 570 will board from Gate 41."

So my family picked up our luggage and carried it over to Gate 41. Not even ten minutes later the public address voice told us that Flight 570 would in fact be boarding from Gate 35.

So, again, we gathered our carry-on luggage and returned to the original gate. Just as we were settling down, the public address voice spoke again: "Thank you for participating in Delta's physical fitness programme."

Hunting Pairs

A group of friends went deer hunting and paired off in twos for the day. That night, one of the hunters returned alone, staggering

under the weight of an eight-point buck.

"Where's Joey?" the others asked.

"Joe fell and broke his ankle. He's 5 miles back up the trail," the successful hunter replied.

"You left Joe laying out there and carried the deer back?" they inquired.

"A tough call," nodded the hunter. "But I figured no one is going to steal Joe!"

Service for One

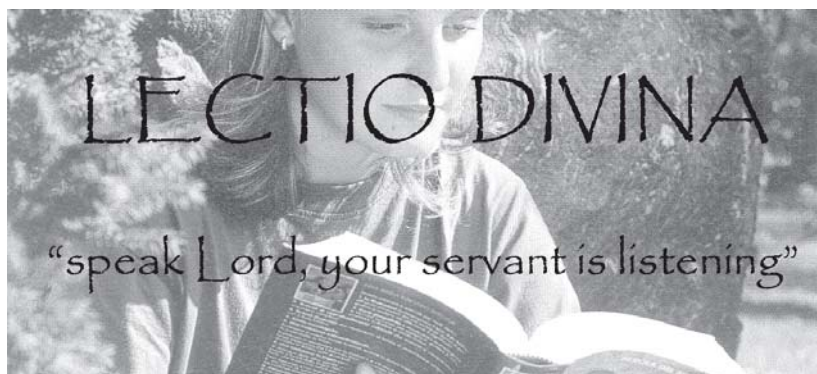
On Sunday, the new young pastor arrived at church and found only an old farmer had shown up.

After waiting a while, the disappointed pastor remarked to the old farmer, "Well, it appears no one else is coming, so we should probably cancel service today."

The farmer, dressed in his Sunday best, looked at the young preacher and said, "Well pastor, I don't know much 'bout preachin', but I do know something 'bout farmin' and if I went out in the field and found only one cow, I'd still feed 'em"

This excited the young preacher who preached for the next 45 minutes a fierce fire and brimstone sermon. Afterwards the pastor asked the old farmer what he thought.

The old farmer remarked, "Well pastor, I don't know much 'bout preachin', but I do know somethin' 'bout farmin' and if I went out in the field and found only one cow, I wouldn't give 'em the whole bale." □



the Lord is my shepherd

Psalm 23

by Roberta Forà

*The Lord is my shepherd:
I shall not want;
He makes me lie down in green
pastures.*

The first words of Psalm 23 immediately immerse us into an uncontaminated landscape. The image of green meadows conjures up thoughts of natural beauty and the marvelous wonders of creation. Imaging God as a shepherd guiding his flock safely, being attentive to each one's needs is poetic and significant.

As the reader goes through the words of this psalm s/he cannot but go back to the parable of the lost sheep. Through this psalm the Lord teaches us that God loves each of us as a shepherd loves even

that lost sheep. He leaves the rest behind and he has no peace till he actually succeeds in finding it again.

Therefore, it is wonderfully consoling to know that the love that the Lord has for each of us and the relationship between Him and every creature is profound, intense, personal and special.

*I fear no evil;
for thou art with me;
thy rod and thy staff,
they comfort me.*

To be able to become profoundly aware of the Lord's love is a source of great assurance. That awareness helps us to overcome the obstacles of life; it lends us a hand in our adversities.

It is so comforting to know that God is the rod on whom we can lean every day and from whom we can draw the serenity that relinquishes any doubt or confusion.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me

All the days of my life;

And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord,

Forever.

If we truly trust God's love for us we will always be happy. The risen Jesus gives meaning to our existence, he dwells in us and in every person we meet every day. This awareness will help us to discover true inner joy which becomes a foretaste of eternity.

The world is so full of sadness, stuck in the quagmire of superfluities and here is where

happiness is only based on a meaningless mirage. Because of this we risk estranging ourselves from the very reason of our existence and so our true Christian witness must come to the fore here.

When praying this psalm, we ask the Lord to help us to grow to trust in Him in order to rediscover that happiness in our hearts.

Help us, O Lord,

to really believe

that you are

the reason for our existence.

May we daily grasp your "crook"

and recognize the many gifts

that you shower on us

enabling us to attain

the fullness of inner peace

and happiness that will help

to overcome the obstacles in our daily lives. □



DEDICATED TO MARY:
SEAT OF WISDOM

Quiet

MARY: SEAT

by Loren

It is necessary to closely examine the event of the incarnation if we are to understand Mary's title: *Seat of Wisdom*.

Mary most holy, Virgin and mother, is that fertile ground into which the seed of the Word was sown. That is the analogy that St. Catherine of Siena, Doctor of the Church, used when she prayed her prayer on the day of Mary's Annunciation: "O Mary, you are that new plant that gave us the scented bloom of the Word, the Only Begotten Son of God, because in you, that fertile ground, the Word was sown."

Mary is therefore, Seat of Wisdom, because she bears within herself the Wisdom of the Father, Jesus Christ who illumines every man who comes into the world.

That is why when we consider Mary as the Seat of Wisdom we contemplate the incarnation of the Son, the Word who "pitches his tent among men" having made Mary his abode. Thus, when we revere Mary as the Seat of Wisdom we enter that tent which is Christ and we reach there through Mary the Gate of Salvation.

Wisdom Incarnate for us made the tree of death into the tree of life. Wisdom reveals the Truth to us: God's heart whereby we know what God wanted when he created us. This is the great gift of Wisdom: man has one more reason to exist, to become aware once more of his mission of love: we are, in fact, created for love and by love.

Mary is the Seat of Wisdom, because she is the Mother of Jesus Christ, *true (fully) God and true (fully) Man*.

The Wisdom of which Mary is the Seat is not that wisdom, nobler or greater than that which man can fathom, but she is the Source itself of all human wisdom. That is why truth and wisdom are one and the same thing. "

Mary retraces Israel's journey towards wisdom as she ponders deeply on the events in Jesus' life as she encounters them: "Mary, for her part, kept all these things, pondering them in her heart." (Lk. 2, 19; cf. Lk 2, 51).

Mary is that wise virgin who does not remain ignorant of how God encounters her along life's journey. She allows Him to teach her through the events of everyday life. That is how she assesses and deepens her understanding of Jesus who would otherwise be an ineffable mystery, a "perpetual enigma." To her, ordinary life becomes history, events become symbols of deep significance and maternity becomes discipleship.



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Spaces

OF WISDOM

zo Villar

Mary does ignore these events. She gets involved and drawn in by them. She passes from amazement to remembrance and to the interpretation of these events in the light of the Bible and wisdom literature.

Just like Wisdom in the Old Testament guides the just through trying times before revealing her secrets (cf. Sir 4,16-18), so Jesus submits his mother to trials in the so-called five episodes of 'refusal,' or better "of evangelization," by which he invites her to transcend flesh and blood in order to enter by the superior way of the Gospel: (i) the twelve-year-old Jesus breaks with tradition in the harsh manner in which tells his parents that they do not understand him; (ii) the words of rejection spoken to his mother at Cana (cf. Jn. 2,4). These words do not allow for temperate interpretations; (iii) the refusal to receive her when she goes to meet him while he refers to his relatives as his "mother, brothers and sisters" (cf. Mt 12, 50). Those words must have pierced her heart like a sword. (iv) When the womb that bore him and the breasts that suckled him are hailed again he refers to all believers (cf. Lk 11,27s). (v) Finally, the act of bequeathing a son to her (as if there were not enough mysteries) in the words: "*Woman this is your son*" (Jn 19, 26) seals a series of estrangements.

As a disciple of Christ, Mary always enters more deeply in the plan of Salvation that unfolds before her eyes especially the mystery of the Cross and Easter. Finally, at Pentecost, Mary reaches the pinnacle of illumination concerning her risen Son and the Church through the gift of the Spirit.

Mary shines as the "seat of Wisdom" not only because Christ, Incarnate Wisdom, made her womb his abode, but also and above all because she "possessed the spiritual knowledge inaccessible to human reasoning and attained (it) through faith the most sublime knowledge." (RM 33).

Because of Mary, we are raised up to evangelical wisdom and the mystery of Salvation is deepened. One cannot just gaze at her and remain unaffected by the "the great things" that God does in history, above all the Paschal Mystery that is relived each day in the world, but also in the face of the events of everyday life. □



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The Tree of Happiness

By Pierluigi Menato

Here! Shad! Here!" The huge German shepherd braked, turned and bounded back to its mistress. Her hair tousled in the wind, cheeks flushed with bright blue eyes...she was a pretty sight. Exhausted, she let herself fall into the fresh green grass as Shad flopped beside her, nuzzling his wet nose close to her face. As she stroked his large head, she saw the animal's bushy tail flap the grass wildly and beyond the dog's tail she saw two feet that were barely visible behind the large old oak tree.

"Tell me, who's there? I came to this pretty little corner of the woods to be alone...but...let's go and see who's there."

Like an excited little brat, Shad jumped up briskly when he heard this suggestion.

"Oh excuse me!" she said somewhat confused, "those are your feet aren't they? They're certainly not mine!"

"I'm sorry to disappoint you, but I think they belong to me," the young boy said, laughing as he looked up from the thick book that he was reading.

"You're a student?"

"That's right!"

"And I bet, a very poor one."

"Poor as a church mouse, and no need to bet."

"You're very kind." She said, sitting some distance from him.

"You're the most extraordinary student I've ever known? Do you know who a poor student is?" She

asked turning her pockets inside-out.

"Oh yes," she went on, "he's clever, a very hard worker, perhaps first in class but without a penny in his pocket...one of those bookworm types - and perhaps more handsome than most others."

The boy lifted his head revealing his surprise. The girl laughed heartily. Then she turned serious.

"You must forgive me. I'm so fed up with everything around me. This frivolous world, its problems and tragedies...they get me all nervous."

"Where are your parents?"

"My mother died when I was little!" she said with a sigh. The young boy seemed touched.

"Dad stays with a frivolous little tart. That's not bad... he's perpetually at receptions and noisy parties. Me, instead...it's no, no..." shaking her head sagaciously.

"Don't you have some young friends your age, who come over?" he asked

"Several, but flighty, you could say, like inflated balloons. The only one who truly loves me is Maria."

"And who is Maria?"

"She's mother's old house maid...I can only speak to her...the only one who really understands me. Do you still have your mother?"

"Yes," the lad said gravely. "She's a very simple person with precious little time to even to look after herself but she is all love and tenderness."

"Let me show you what she

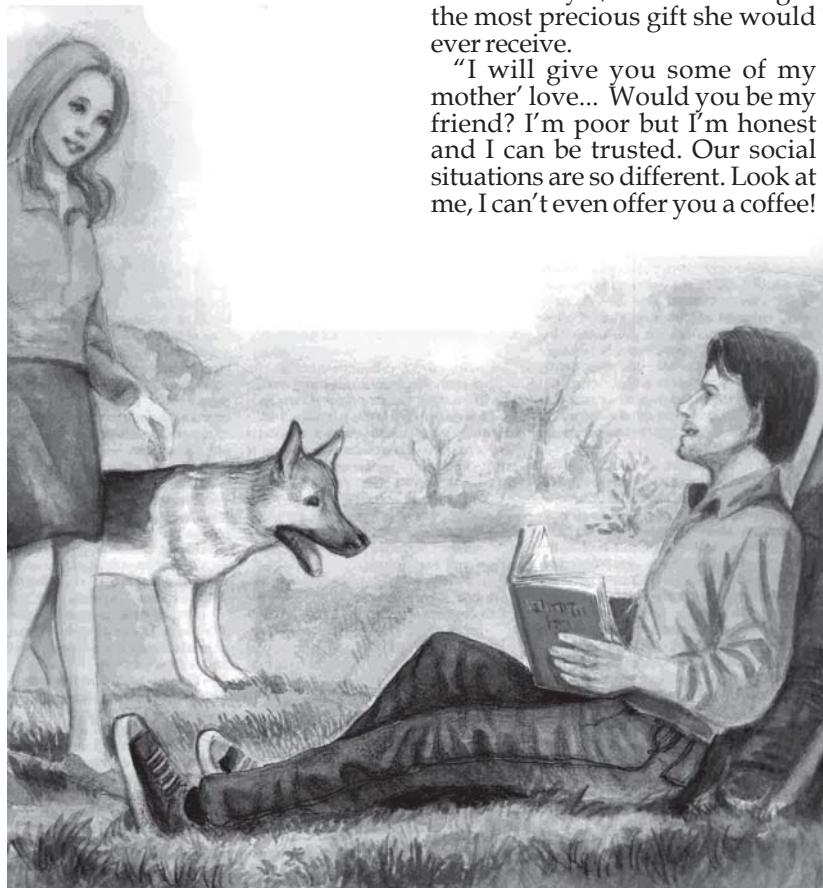
looks like." From his pocket he took out a worn out old crumpled photograph. He looked at it lovingly for a long time and then gave it to the girl and said very emotionally:

"Poor mamma, she's made so many sacrifices for me! You can't imagine! She slogs night and day to pay for my studies!"

"You're so lucky! How I wish I had a mother who understood me and loved me..." Two big tears rolled down through her long eyelashes like two pearls down a sand dune.

The boy was amazed. This was some queer adventure. He was poor and insignificant and here he was consoling a beautiful little girl, so well dressed. She seemed to be the perfect picture of happiness. He did not know what to say, he was so embarrassed and oblivious to any distraction. He had been so obsessed with his books focusing on his great dream of becoming a doctor. Yes, one day he *would* be a doctor. At the moment he had nothing to offer, he truly was as poor as a church mouse. But yet, he offered the girl the most precious gift she would ever receive.

"I will give you some of my mother's love... Would you be my friend? I'm poor but I'm honest and I can be trusted. Our social situations are so different. Look at me, I can't even offer you a coffee!"



But if you want to write to my mother... I'm sure she will reply."

This unusual pact of friendship was sealed with a simple but firm handshake.

She usually arrived before him and she would eagerly wait for him under the old tree, till she could see him coming through the trees. When Stephen appeared she would wave out to him to draw his attention. She gradually got to know a lot of things about him. She became aware that he had lost his father and was living in a poor apartment perhaps with not enough means to have a decent supper before going to bed. Oh how she wished she could help him! But that would be such a humiliation. She got the idea of coming with a little satchel with a few sandwiches or some sweets.

"You know Stephen, I'm not ashamed of my youthful appetite, but if you keep me company I'll be very thrilled," so saying she would chomp hungrily into her sandwich. Stephen accepted her offer smiling while reading the little loving notes from his mother offering some important lessons. The forest was so peaceful.

But one sad day he waited and waited under the old tree for what seemed like forever. His friend did not come there anymore. Was there an accident, a terrible failure, did a financial collapse make Martina as poor as he – this sudden departure it seemed almost like an escape. Everything was reduced to just a sweet memory. He felt he had lost a really good friend, even though he wouldn't dare to admit it to

anyone. He sometimes wondered if Martina would preserve the freshness and the marvelous innocence of her youthful years in such a fragile environment without some kind of support. Perhaps she would be close to Maria, that good lady. At least she would keep an eye on Martina. But where was she?

"Where have they gone?" Stephen looked through the leafy canopy in the woods and wondered.

Later he found out that her entire estate was sold at an auction: her house, her expensive furniture, original paintings and other valuables. Such a loss! If only he could, he would buy it all back and give it to her! But his pockets (he felt them)...they were empty... but for how long? In order to forget this tragedy he decided to throw himself intensely into his studies and he came out successful. It was time now to fulfill his vow – he immediately found a position at an ultramodern clinic in the city. He gradually started a private practice. What a relief, his mother would finally be able to rest!

Poor mother! What a life she had led! She was like a never-failing fountain; she sought no replenishment or comfort. How many difficulties she had to encounter while she looked after her husband, Stephen's father! She never, for one moment, thought of herself. After her husband died it was all for love of Stephen. She wanted him to grow up to be a gentleman, possibly a great man. Very soon that lanky youngster revealed his diligent nature and he started reaching the top of his class. □

(to be continued)

Don Bosco: The Times, The Man, The Facts

DON BOSCO AT ESTE

by Natale Cerrato (T/A:ID)

By now it should be noted from the preceding articles how many journeys Don Bosco made for reasons of his ministry and above all to find ways of establishing his presence in Piedmont and Lombardy. Think of the trips he made to Liguria and Tuscany and his twenty trips to Rome without speaking of his journeys to other cities in Italy. You cannot forget the journeys he made to France, Spain and Austria.

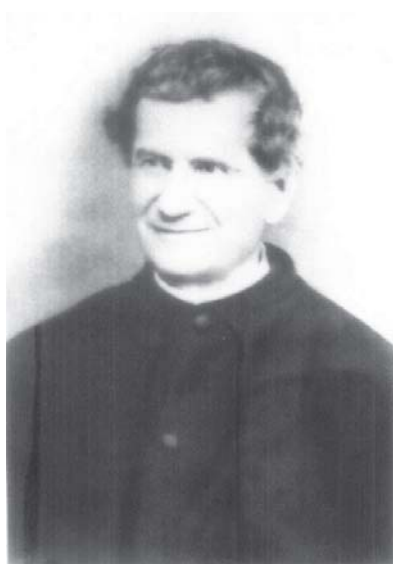
During a period in which it was no pleasure to travel, Don Bosco was a great traveller. Someone would ask if Don Bosco went to



Veneto. Certainly, Don Bosco went to Veneto and precisely to Este, the ancient fiefdom of a family of the same name where there is the elegant palace built in the Venetian style and which eventually became the administrative capital for the region of lower Padua.

Ca' Pesaro to Este

At Este there is a grand building called 'Ca' Pesaro' belonging to a family. It was built in the XVIII cent. This imposing structure had a view of the Eugene and the Berici hills. It was a holiday resort that had not been visited by its owners for a very long time. Who would believe that in 1878 the Salesians would be residents of Ca' Pesaro their first foundation in Veneto? Its value rose because Fr. Angelo Perin the Parish Priest of Our



Don Bosco at 63

Lady of Graces dreamt that at Ca' Pesaro an institute to educate youth would be founded and the man to be contacted for this purpose was Don Bosco himself.

Fr. Perin got the approval of the Bishop of Padua Mons. Henry Manfredini and on June 25th drew up a contract with Don Bosco who asked Fr. Anthony Sala to look into the details. On September 16th the deed was drawn up between Fr. Perin regarding the 'accounts, the name and the price' between Don Bosco and Gradenigo Conti of Venice who was the owner of the building. But the 'funds' that Don Bosco spoke of was an affidavit stating that his benefactors, particularly Mr. Benedict Pelà, a rich and generous citizen of the place would more than competently meet the expenses but subsequently the Salesians themselves would provide for themselves out of their own labours.

On October 10th 1878, Father John Tamietti and another Salesian reached Este. They lodged temporarily with a kindly family until November 18th when the work of adaptation was completed and out of respect for

Mons. Manfredini, the Bishop of Padua, Ca' Pesaro was called Manfredini College (cf. Annals I, p. 328-332).

Don Bosco at Manfredini College at Este

On 2nd April 1879 the college was graced with the presence of Don Bosco. As soon as he reached Este he was directed to the residence of his great benefactor, Benedict Pelà. Pelà was celebrating his seventy-ninth birthday and on that occasion he had invited his friends to lunch and he wanted Don Bosco to be present at all cost and he could never guess the surprise that awaited him when Don Bosco got up to raise the toast in which he extolled the generosity of the citizens of Este towards the poor Salesians. Then he made an announcement which thrilled his host. "On this happy day," he continued, "I joyfully bow to our dear Benedict Pelà, Knight of the Order of St. Sylvester - an honour which the Holy Father has bestowed on him in token of his pleasure for all he does for the new Salesian boarding school and the care of Christian youth." (*EBM 14, 74*). The guests were all deeply moved, and Mr. Pelà himself wept with joy. None could have asked for a warmer and more joyful gathering.

From the house of his benefactor Don Bosco went to the Salesian school where the kindhearted Benedict Pelà had thought of everything, even to furnishing Don Bosco's bedroom with soft-toned curtains to ease his hurting eyesight. The next day Pelà called on him with a friend, Anthony Venturini and, taking from his



Villa Manfredini (Padua)



*Fr. Renato Ziggioni,
Rector Major
The Fifth Successor
of Don Bosco*

wallet an IOU for eight thousand lire which Father Sala had given him. This dear benefactor would always be a real father to the Manfredini Salesian School.

From Este to the World

Este was the spark that would fan into a great flame the Salesian work in the Veneto region. In 1882, only four years from the foundation of Este the Salesian house of Mogliano Veneto came into existence. After the death of Don Rua, Verona (1891), then Trent (1893), Trieste (1898), Chioggia (1899), Schio (1901) and that is how the work develops even to this day.

It would be necessary to mention the great Salesians who took Don Bosco's name from Veneto to the

rest of the world. Here we limit ourselves to just one, Fr. Renato Ziggioni.

He was born at Bevadoro on the outskirts of Campodoro in the province of Padua. At the age of 7 he was admitted at the Manfredini Salesian School where his Salesian vocation matured. He was conscripted to take part in the Great War of 1915-1918 at Carso on the Piave river. He returned after having encountered many difficulties and was awarded the silver medal and the rank of a Captain. He was ordained a priest in 1920 and appointed to Este till 1924 as rector of the "Don Bosco" college of Pordenone. In 1930 Fr. Philip Rinaldi wanted him to be the provincial of the Central Province and in 1935 Fr. Ricaldone appointed him Provincial of Sicily. In 1937 he was asked to become the Councilor of Studies and in 1950 he was appointed the Vicar General of the Congregation. In 1952 he was elected Rector Major.

To guide the Congregation he felt it necessary together with his duty of government, to personally meet the Salesians around the world. To realize such a project took him more than seven years of journeys, promoting vocations and forming new generations of Salesians, evangelizing youth on their attachment to the Church and fidelity to the Founder. He stepped down with extraordinary humility in 1965. He believed he was doing the will of God for him. In 1972 he returned to Veneto to Albaré di Costermano (Verona). He remained there till he died on April 19th 1983 at the ripe old age of 91.

For all of us Salesians he was a father, a brother, a friend, another Don Bosco! □

NEWSBITS

VATICAN

Jeanne Jugan: a Saint of hope for the aged poor. On the 21st of February 2009 Pope Benedict XVI announced that Jeanne Jugan, a humble French woman who established an international religious family dedicated to the care of the needy elderly will officially become a saint of the Roman Catholic Church on 11th October, 2009. At the time of her beatification, on 3rd October 1982, she was hailed by Pope John Paul II as "a woman of prophetic intuition whose spirituality and apostolic message were timelier than ever."



Born in Cancale, in France, in 1792, she spent her childhood in dire poverty but was deeply imbued in the Christian faith. Towards the end of 1839, on a cold winter's night, she took into her home at Saint Servan an elderly, blind infirm woman, Anne Chauvin, who was alone and in

need. Soon more old women arrived at her doorstep. Jeanne was joined by a small group of young women who were willing to help with the care of her elderly guests and from that single act of hospitality was born the Congregation of the Little Sisters of the Poor whose main pillars are faith in the fatherhood of God and love for Jesus Christ recognized and served in the aged poor. However the cure of Doctor Edward Erwin Gatz of an adenocarcinoma of the esophagus is the miracle attributed to the intercession of Jeanne Jugan.

One hundred and seventy years later over 2700 Little Sisters of the Poor care for more than 13000 needy elderly persons in 202 family-like homes in 31 countries around the world. 13 of these homes are in India. The Little Sisters believe that in Jeanne Jugan, the elderly will have a faithful friend and intercessor.

Pakistan

Smoke was still rising from the Christian village of Korian in Punjab province on July 31 after it was completely destroyed in a violent raid the previous night by thousands of Muslims.

Korian was home to about 100 Christian families, most of them laborers, who all fled the area in the wake of the attack. No one died in the incident.

The village in Faisalabad diocese was attacked after Muslims accused a family there of blasphemy. In all, 60 houses and two churches belonging to the Church of Pakistan and the New Apostolic Church were



*A Christian house set alight
by Muslims*

destroyed and livestock stolen.

"They have left nothing. My horse, my only source of income, has also been taken," said Shubaan Masih, a local Christian.

The mob also blockaded the road leading to the village for several hours refusing entry to police or firefighters.

Masih said the mob was armed with firearms and explosives. "They used trucks to break the walls and petrol to start the fires," he said. "We saved our lives only by hiding in the fields until three in the morning, when relatives arrived with vehicles to collect us. The children cried all night," Masih said.

Christian politicians and Catholic priests have condemned the incident and demanded investigations of the assault. A group of seven Catholic priests went to visit the site.

"One cannot but weep upon seeing the trail of destruction left behind," said Father Aftab James Paul, director of Faisalabad diocese's Commission for Interfaith Dialogue. (UCAN)

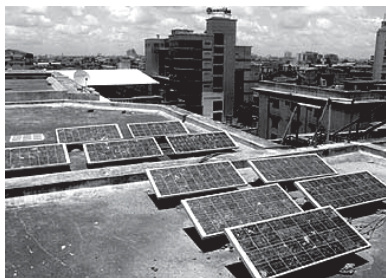
KOLKATA

A Jesuit college in eastern India has taken the lead in developing in-house technology to harness

green energy for the institution's various needs.

Fr. John Felix Raj SJ, principal of St. Xavier's Autonomous College in Kolkata, says green energy is the answer to overcoming severe power shortages affecting the city.

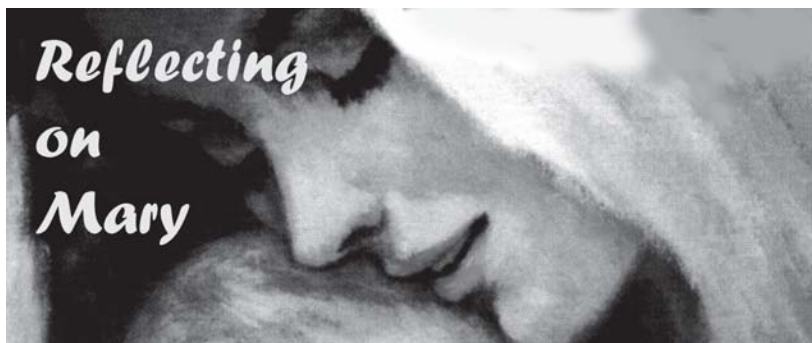
The college has developed an independent solar power system that is used to operate 10 computers. Gradually the institution will use the system to operate other electrical appliances, the principal said.



Fr. Xavier Savarimuthu SJ, who teaches environmental science at the college, says green energy is available throughout the year and the new power system provides an uninterrupted energy supply at no cost.

Pradeep Kumar Chakraborty, who developed the power system, claims the college is the first educational institution in the city to develop and use solar power to operate computers. "It is a great achievement to develop this technology without support from solar-power firms," said the dean of the college's masters programmes.

Archbishop Lucas Sirkar of Calcutta hailed the college's initiative. The prelate said he supports such initiatives and that he himself received a solar lamp for emergency use two years ago. □



AT THE SCHOOL OF MARY - II

by Eamon R. Carroll, O. Carm.

Early Carthusians, as Henry Kalkar and Dominic of Prussia (both 15th century) made adaptations, as did others. Subsequently, along with the Dominicans members of other religious congregations spread this Marian devotion. Among examples of papal support is St. Pius V, the Dominican pope, who put in the calendar the feast of the Holy Rosary (Oct. 7) in thanksgiving for the Christian victory at the battle of Lepanto (1573), and whose document of 1569 (Consueverunt) was an admirable summary and charter for the Rosary. The Ave was prescribed in the 1586 breviary. Confraternities of the Rosary began everywhere. Many saints were apostles of the Rosary. The list of them is like a litany: St. Peter Canisius (d. 1591), St. Philip Neri (d. 1595), St. Louis Marie Grignion de Montfort (d. 1716) singled out by the pope, (n. 15), St. Francis de

Sales (d. 1622) who devoted an hour a day to the Rosary, thanking Mary for assistance against despair. St. Bernardine of Siena (Franciscan) (d. 1444) said:

“The glorious Virgin Mary is a most wondrous queen, nor, wondrous to say, is it possible to greet her and not be greeted in return. If you say with devotion a thousand ‘Ave Marias’ in a day, a thousand times you will be greeted by the Virgin.”

The May 2000 Newsletter from the Ecumenical Society of the BVM had an article by a retired Anglican priest Antony Bell “The Grace of the Rosary in Personal and Corporate Prayer.” He discovered the Rosary as “a dynamic form of prayer” at Medjugorje, where all fifteen mysteries are recited every evening. Sometimes it is objected that a ten-fold Hail Mary is overly repetitive. Fr. Robert Llewellyn answered the charge of “vain



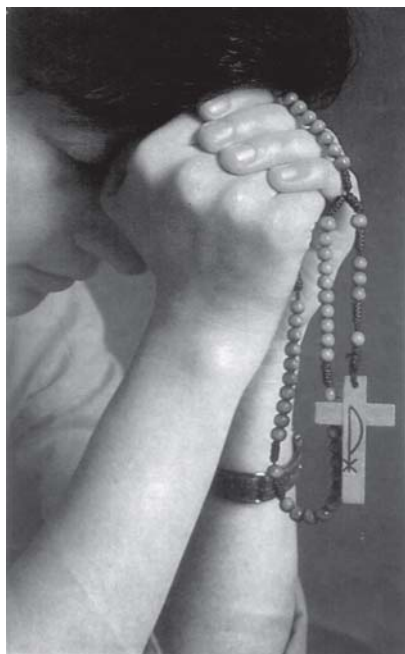
repetition" in *A Doorway to Silence*, 1986: "No, for if you give ten hammer blows on a nail and it does not penetrate, then your action is vain, but if with each blow there is penetration, then your action is useful and not vain. Is it fanciful to see the petitions of the Rosary as hammering at the heart of God?" And to the charge "it's mechanical" the answer is there is a mechanical element in most activities, even walking down a road, for each step is purposeful. Moreover "the physical touch of the beads engages the attention of the mind as well as of the body, and stays thought from wandering."

Using a word currently in wide popular usage, Fr. A. Bell recommends to our restless world the Rosary for both private and communal prayer, facilitating reflection on our Lord's life: "The constant repetition of a clear *mantra*

which guides the thought and gently keeps us on track, as the banks of a stream contain and guide the flow of the water."

Pope John Paul notes that many popes have promoted the Rosary, mentioning first Leo XIII (d. 1903) who wrote more than a dozen letters on the subject, starting in 1883. And the present Holy Father's immediate predecessors, Blessed John XXIII and Paul VI all urged this prayer. John XXIII gave us personal meditations on the Rosary, and Paul VI had a significant section on the Rosary in his letter of Feb. 2, 1974, on the restoration and promotion of Marian devotion in the liturgy.

The Rosary remains a significant aspect of Catholic life. A. Bell notes its appeal: "always to be found in its simplicity, accessible to men and women, boys and girls of all cultures and of all social and educational backgrounds. It is the most egalitarian of prayers." It is for young and old, university professors and small children starting school, for the very learned and for people who cannot read or write. Like Our Blessed Mother herself her Rosary keeps taking on new life and steering people to Christ her Son. There was recently published the 30th anniversary edition of Italian author Carlo Carretto's (d. 1988) *Letters from the Desert*, best-known of his books. As he tells it, in his years in the North African desert he discovered the "soul" of the Rosary. "Whether you meditate it or not, whether or not you get distracted, if you love the rosary



deeply and can't let a day go by without saying it you are already a person of prayer. The rosary is like the echo of a wave breaking on the shore, God's shore: Hail Mary... Hail Mary... Hail Mary. ..It is like your mother's hand on your childhood cradle. The rosary is a point of arrival, not of departure...an incomprehensible prayer for the 'commonsense' man, just as it is incomprehensible to repeat 'I love you' a thousand times a day to a God one cannot see. But for the pure of heart it is understandable; the person rooted in the Kingdom and living the beatitudes understands the rosary" (Orbis, Maryknoll, 2002).

Years back when Henri Ghe'on of France was directing his play "The Marriage of St. Francis" at a rehearsal one of the actors playing

a bit part in a crowd scene asked him what he should be doing at that time. Ghe'on suggested he say the Rosary. After the production was over the actor told him what had happened. He had long given up the practice of his Catholic faith, but night after night as he knelt on the stage saying the Rosary, he had begun to think of what he was doing and suddenly it became real. He discovered he was actually *praying* the Rosary, and from that moment he returned to the Church. The actor had learned that coining near to the Mother of Jesus can be dangerous, can be delivered into the hands of her Son and his Church.

Some years ago (1948) a prominent English writer and editor of the communist paper *The Worker* became a Catholic. His book *I Believe* has this account. Leaving his London office one evening in a mood of despair he felt a compulsion to enter a nearby Catholic church. He sat in the back, and he wrote "I was at home at once." Next day he left the office an hour early; simply sat an hour in darkness, the only slight light was the sanctuary lamp. This went on for weeks until one evening sitting there as unobtrusively as possible he saw a young woman, shabbily dressed, obviously worried. She knelt at our Lady's statue, lit a candle, dropped coins in a box. Hyde saw she held a string of beads, her hands moving, head nodding now and then. He wrote: "This was the Catholic practice of which I knew nothing. This was the world I

had been groping for." He stole a glance at the woman's face as she left the church, and he reports "Whatever had been troubling her was gone. Just like that. And I had been carrying my load around with me for months and years."

Making sure no one was watching Hyde went to the Blessed Virgin's statue, put some coins in the box, lit a candle, knelt, tried to pray. Problem was he didn't know any prayers to the Virgin Mary, even how to start.

Trying to recall a poem of Chesterton or Belloc didn't help (Hyde was well educated and both were prominent Catholic writers). As he tells it: At last I heard myself mumbling something which seemed appropriate enough when it began but which petered out, becoming miserably inappropriate. But it did

not matter. I knew my search was at an end. I had not talked to anyone. Outside the church I tried to remember the words I had said and almost laughed as I recalled them. They were those of a dance tune of the 1920's, a gramophone record which I had bought in my adolescence: "O sweet and lovely Lady be good, O Lady be good to me." Mary heard his prayer!

And a final Rosary story, from the London *Tablet* (June 22, 2002), Praying on Pedals. Trevor Mostyn takes his rosary to John O'Groats: the rosary on my handlebars. Mosytn is the paper's expert on the Middle East. The article describes a two-week bicycle ride from Land's End (Penzance) in southwest England to John O'Groats in the far north of Scotland to raise funds in aid of Palestinian infants and children. Traveling the 960 miles with a friend's 24 year old, Mostyn (at 56) found the best way to overcome impossible obstacles, especially steep hills, was the Rosary. He writes: "Was it a miracle or do Hail Marys have a physical rhythm like the rocking to sleep of a child that supports the body's ability to prevail?" And with respect to rhythm the *British Medical Journal* reported the researches of an Italian professor (Luciano Bernardi) to the effect that saying the Rosary induces regular rhythmic breathing with a beneficial calming effect (London *Tablet* 5 Jan 2002). □



**LOVING CHILDREN TO
THEIR LOVING MOTHER**

Thank you Jesus and Mother Mary for giving my husband a job last year. Please continue to look after him and to guide and help him to do God's will always.

Mrs. C. Fernandes, Mumbai

Thank you 'Mama Mary' for helping me pass my IRDA government Insurance examinations with 74%.

Mona Noel Pothan, Mumbai

Thank you Mother Mary for a gift of a baby boy who was born healthy, in spite of being born in the 8th month. Bestow your blessings on our family always.

Mrs. Gladys Cardona, Mumbai

On November 1st 2008, I was coming out of a laboratory parking lot after doing my blood work. I accidentally took a wrong turn towards the oncoming traffic. The people in the opposite direction slowed down when they saw me. If they had not, I would have had a head-on collision. I know Mother Mary was with me and she protected me from all the anxiety. I did not even panic. I just made the sign of the cross right away, turned back into the parking lot and went into the right lane. I always recite the three Hail Marys. I thank you Mother Mary for saving me.

Cecilia Faria, Mississauga, Canada

I thank Our Lady for interceding with the Lord and granting Mira the grace she was praying so hard for. I thank you for giving her peace and confidence and good health.

Mrs P. Samagond

I was diagnosed with a chronic complication of the gall bladder infection. I had visited the shrine and picked up a copy of Don Bosco's Madonna. I kept on praying the Our Father and Three Hail Marys. The surgery was successful and the biopsy reports turned out to be negative. I am most grateful for the powerful intercession of Our Lady.

Hannah Joji, Mumbai

My grandson M. Vinaykumar had an accident and had damaged his jaw and head. He had to undergo a surgery. The moment I heard about the accident I began praying the 3 Hail Marys. I was so grateful and relieved to know that all the tests turned out negative and he is recovering well after a 5 hour surgery.

Augustine Isaac, Secunderabad

My heartfelt thanks to Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament and Mary Help of Christians for all the favours and blessings received.

Mr. Mark W. Dodd, Pune

My sincere thanks to Our Lady for granting my daughter a good percentage and admission in college.

Mrs. C. Miranda, Mumbai

THE DEVOTION OF THE THREE HAIL MARYS



The devotion of the THREE HAIL MARYS is a very simple yet most efficacious devotion. Everyday, recite Three Hail Marys, adding the invocation: "O Mary, My Mother, keep me from mortal sin." Many people recite the Three Hail Marys as part of their morning and night prayers. To practise this devotion in time of danger, stress, special need or temptation, is a sure means to obtain Our Lady's help.

My sincere thanks to our Blessed Mother Don Bosco and St Dominic Savio through the daily recitation of the three hail Marys my life was saved. In the month of March I fell extremely ill with a high fever, back and stomach pain. I had to be admitted to hospital as I was in a serious condition. I was diagnosed with a cyst on my kidney. It was badly infected and it was a life-and-death situation; I had to have immediate surgery, if not, my whole system would shut down. The surgery was a success I offer my sincere thanks Mother Mary for saving my life and for my amazing recovery. Please continue to bless my family and me.

Pamela Wells, Melbourne, Australia
My sincere thanks to Our Lady for supporting me and my family when I need her most.

Rodney, Mumbai

On 3rd May 2009 while my husband was driving and going on a site job, he became aware that he had a terrible back pain and heavy sweating. This was later followed by chest pain. He felt the symptoms were of a heart attack. He drove himself to the hospital and reached there safely just in time. He was then rushed to the CCU ward, all were surprised to know that he drove himself. It was Mary our Mother who took him safely to the hospital as we always recite the three Hail Marys every day for and prayed for the protection to our Mother and there was also the rosary in my husband's car which is Mary's weapon for protection. Many thanks to our Mother for her protection.

Sabina D'Souza, Kuwait
Thanks to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and dear Mother Mary Help of Christians for the blessings of good health bestowed on my son during his illness, through the faithful recitation of the three Hail Marys. Also a special prayer for Ashvina, my brother and sisters who prayed equally during our time of need. We will continue praying the three Hail Marys.

Mrs. M. Thomas, Pune
Thank you dear Mother Mary for blessing us with a healthy baby boy through the faithful recitation of the three Hail Marys.

Irene D'Mello, Goa

**THEY ARE GRATEFUL TO
OUR LADY AND DON BOSCO**

Dear Mother Mary, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio thank you for blessing me in every small way. *Lynette, Mumbai*

For all the favours I have received I am grateful to Our Lady and Don Bosco and for a successful operation, praise the Lord. *Mathew Mendes, Goa*

My heartfelt thanks to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Our Lady and Don Bosco for solving our Goa problems in spite of so much harassment and disappointments for more than 20 years. *Martha Fernandes, Australia*

Thank you Mother Mary and Don Bosco for blessing my family and do continue to keep my family under your maternal protection. *Mr. William Joyce Mascarenhas*

My heartfelt gratitude to Mother Mary and Don Bosco for helping me secure a distinction in my graduation examinations. *Nikita Puthran, Mumbai*

Thank you Mother Mary, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for helping me get a job abroad and for other favours received. My sincere thanks for success in my X & XII exams too.

Savio Miranda

Thank you dear Mother Mary and Don Bosco for the continued good health of Maya and Mira. *Mrs. P. Samagond, USA*

On the 8th May 2009 my husband suffered a miocardiac infarction and was rushed in an auto to the doctor. All through the journey we prayed "Be with us Mary along the way." Surely Our Blessed Mother was there. Thank you for always protecting us and we are immensely grateful.

H. Woodfall, Erode

My sincere thanks to the most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mother Mary and Don Bosco for helping my daughter Lyra secure a first class in her TYBA exams. Dear Mother Mary always be a loving guide to my children. *Mrs. L. Lobo, Mumbai*

Thank you dear Mother Mary Help of Christians for the many favours received. *Mrs. M. George, Mumbai*

Thank you dear Lord Jesus, Mary Help of Christians and Don Bosco for helping my son to get a good job and for helping my daughter to get a promotion and all the favours received through the recitation of the 3 Hail Marys. *A Devotee*

My sincere thanks to Our Lady. My son had an abscess on his leg. I was very worried. Before visiting the doctor I said the 3 Hail Marys. The doctor said there was nothing to worry. He is now fine and I am grateful to Our Blessed Mother, St. John Bosco and St. Dominic Savio. *Jessie, Mumbai*

THANKS TO DEAR ST. DOMINIC SAVIO



A sister-companion and I sent a couple a prayer to Dominic Savio, and encouraged them to pray to him for the gift of a child. Last year the wife conceived. She had to take rest for most of the nine months, and through the intercession of St. Dominic Savio, twins were born, Savio and Savianna! Praise and thanks to Jesus, and sincere gratitude to our little St. Dominic Savio.

Sr. Madeleine Sophie

My wife Maria was wearing the scapular of St. Dominic Savio throughout her pregnancy. She delivered a normal baby girl on 7th July through caesarian. But my wife Maria is getting fever till today and she is in the hospital along with the baby. Twice she was given blood transfusion. But thanks to the intercession of St. Dominic Savio we have received the gift of a beautiful baby girl.

Kennedy and Maria D'Sa, Goa

Thank you Jesus, Mother Mary and St. Dominic Savio for all the favours and blessings received.

Mrs. Monteiro, Mumbai

Thanks to you, dear Mother Mary and St. Dominic Savio for helping my son pass in his SSC examinations and for all the favours received.

Mrs. Clara Carvalho, Mumbai

Many thanks to the Almighty Father, Mother Mary and dear St. Dominic Savio for the innumerable favours granted all through the year. Do continue to be with us.

F. DeSousa, and Family, USA

My sincere thanks to Our Lady, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for all the favours received.

A Devotee

My thanks to Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for protecting me from danger and for the many favours granted to me.

Vijay Aranha, Udipi

APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER

OCTOBER 2009

Holy Father's General Intention: *That Sunday may be lived as the day on which Christians gather to celebrate the risen Lord, participating in the Eucharist.*

Missionary Intention: *That the entire People of God, to whom Christ entrusted the mandate to go and preach the Gospel to every creature, may eagerly assume their own missionary responsibility and consider it the highest service they can offer humanity.*

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MARY WAS THERE

Returning home late one night after a second shift the headlight on my scooter failed. The road ahead was pitch dark. I was about 3 km from home. The highway was lonely, not a house in sight. I drove cautiously. A white Maruti car overtook me and proceeded. In order to approach my village I had to take a sharp right turn. Imagine my panic and surprise when I saw the same car parked right across the road. I immediately, cautiously went around the car and went home. The people in the car could have harmed me, but I believe it was the protection of Our Lady that kept me safe. I always wear her medal around my neck and I have one fixed on my scooter as well.

(Vally Paul, Colvale, Goa)

Don Bosco's Madonna, has developed to its present form from a folder published in 1937, by late Fr Aurelius Maschio, on behalf of the Salesians of Don Bosco, Bombay.

The magazine is sent to all who ask for it, even though there is a fixed subscription (*Rs 200/- India & Rs 400/- Airmail*). We trust in the generosity of our readers/benefactors.

Whatever you send us will help cover the expenses of printing and mailing; the surplus if any, is devoted to the support of orphans and poor boys in our schools and apostolic centres.

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